THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Government is implementing Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project, which envisages cutting of a ship channel to connect the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal through Palk Bay and Palk Strait so that most of the ships, depending on draft required, moving between the east and the west coast of India, could have a continuous navigable sea route around the Peninsula within India's own territorial waters.

(c) The sanctioned cost of the project is Rs. 2427.40 crores.

Road from Jammu to Suchetgarh

1236. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for the upgradation of the State Road from Jammu to Suchetgarh in Jammu and Kashmir has been submitted to this Ministry;

(b) if so, the steps that has been taken to upgrade this road;

(c) the amount released by Government for this purpose; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir. A proposal for widening and upgradation of Satwari Airport R.S. Pura road including construction of 100 mtr. span two lane pre-stressed concrete bridge over Balol Nallah, which is the part of Jammu-Suchetgarh road, has been received only on 25th July, 2005 from State Government.

(b) The proposal has been approved by the Ministry.

(c) and (d) The expenditure can be incurred for this project also from the CRF funds released to State Government from time to time based on utilisation certificate received from the State Government.

Hi-Tech number plates

1237. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government had proposed usage of hi-tech number plates for vehicles in view of large number of thefts and some of them being used for committing crimes;